

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of combining TDM data and data packets comprising:  
receiving a plurality of TDM data columns;  
receiving a plurality of data packets;  
transforming a first subset of the data packets into one or more TDM packet columns;  
and  
combining the TDM packet columns with a first subset of the TDM data columns to form  
a data payload of an outgoing TDM data frame.

Claim 2 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein a TDM packet column includes a high  
priority data packet and a low priority data packet.

Claim 3 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the receiving a plurality of TDM data  
columns further comprises receiving an incoming TDM data frame containing a second subset of  
TDM data columns.

Claim 4 (Original): The method of claim 3, wherein the receiving a plurality of TDM data  
columns further comprises receiving a third subset of TDM data columns from a TDM user  
interface.

Claim 5 (Original): The method of claim 3, further comprising separating the second subset of  
TDM data columns into a plurality of DROP TDM data columns and a plurality of THROUGH  
TDM data columns.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 4, further comprising sending ~~a~~ the DROP  
TDM data columns to a TDM user interface.

Claim 7 (Original): The method of claim 5, wherein the outgoing TDM data frame contains the  
through TDM data columns.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 6, wherein the outgoing TDM data frame contains a third subset of TDM data columns from the a TDM user interface.

Claim 9 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the receiving a plurality of data packets further comprises receiving an incoming TDM data frame containing a second subset of data packets.

Claim 10 (Original): The method of claim 9, wherein the receiving a plurality of data packets further comprises receiving a third subset of data packets from a packet user interface.

Claim 11 (Original): The method of claim 9, further comprising separating the second subset of data packets as DROP data packets and THROUGH data packets.

Claim 12 (Original): The method of claim 11, wherein the DROP data packets are sent to a packet user interface.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 11, wherein the outgoing TDM data frame contains the THROUGH data packets.

Claim 14 (Original): The method of claim 13, wherein the outgoing TDM data frame contains a third subset of data packets from a packet user interface.

Claim 15 (Original): The method of claim 1, wherein the TDM packet columns and the TDM data columns are interleaved within the payload.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): A method of combining TDM data and data packets comprising:  
receiving a first plurality of TDM data columns;  
receiving a first plurality of data packets;  
transforming a first subset of the first plurality of data packets into a first group of TDM packet columns;  
combining the first group of TDM packet columns with a first subset of the first plurality of TDM data columns to form a first data payload of a first TDM data frame;

receiving a second plurality of TDM data columns;  
receiving a second plurality of data packets; transforming a first subset of the second plurality of data packets into a second group of TDM packet columns; and  
combining the second group of TDM packet columns with a first subset of the second plurality of TDM data columns to form a second data payload of a second TDM data frame.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 16, wherein the first data payload is larger than the second data payload.

Claim 18 (Original): The method of claim 16, wherein the first subset of the first plurality of TDM data columns is larger than the first subset of the second plurality of TDM data columns.

Claim 19 (Original): The method of claim 16, wherein the first group of TDM packet columns is larger than the second group of TDM packet columns.

Claim 20 (Original): The method of claim 16, wherein a TDM packet column includes a high priority data packet and a low priority data packet.

Claim 21 (Canceled):

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): ~~The network node of claim 21, wherein the TDM/Packet cross connect switch, further comprises~~ A network node comprising:

a first network interface;

a first TDM Framer/Deframer coupled to the first network interface and configured to deframe a first TDM frame from the first network interface;

a TDM/Packet cross connect switch coupled to the first network interface;

a TDM user interface coupled to the TDM/Packet cross connect switch; and

a packet user interface coupled to the TDM/Packet cross connect switch.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): The network node of claim 22, further comprising a first dynamic multiplexer/demultiplexer coupled to the first TDM Framer/Deframer and the TDM/Packet cross connect switch and configured to separate data from the first TDM data frame

into TDM data and packet data.

Claim 24 (Original): The network node of claim 23, further comprising a TDM switch coupled to the first dynamic multiplexer/demultiplexer and configured to receive a TDM THROUGH payload and a TDM DROP payload from the first dynamic multiplexer/demultiplexer.

Claim 25 (Original): The network node of claim 24, wherein the TDM switch is configured to receive a TDM ADD payload from the TDM user interface.

Claim 26 (Original): The network node of claim 25, wherein the TDM switch is configured to: send the TDM THROUGH payload and the TDM ADD payload to a second dynamic multiplexer/demultiplexer; and send the TDM DROP payload to the TDM user interface.

Claim 27 (Original): The network node of claim 26, further comprising a packet switch coupled to the first dynamic multiplexer/demultiplexer and the second dynamic multiplexer/demultiplexer.

Claim 28 (Original): The network node of claim 22, further comprising a packet switch coupled to the first dynamic multiplexer/demultiplexer and configured to receive a packet THROUGH payload and a packet DROP payload from the first dynamic multiplexer/demultiplexer.

Claim 29 (Original): The network node of claim 28, further comprising a packet user interface and wherein the packet switch is configured to receive a packet ADD payload from the packet user interface.

Claim 30 (Original): The network node of claim 29, wherein the packet switch is configured to: send the packet THROUGH payload and the packet ADD payload to a second dynamic multiplexer/demultiplexer; and send the packet DROP payload to the packet user interface.

Claim 31 (Currently Amended): A system for combining TDM data and data packets comprising:

means for receiving a plurality of TDM data columns;

means for receiving a plurality of data packets;  
means for transforming a first subset of the data packets into one or more TDM packet columns; and  
means for combining the TDM packet columns with a first subset of the TDM data columns to form a data payload of an outgoing TDM data frame.

Claim 32 (Original): The system of claim 31, wherein a TDM packet column includes a high priority data packet and a low priority data packet.

Claim 33 (Original): The system of claim 31, wherein the means for receiving a plurality of TDM data columns further comprises means for receiving an incoming TDM data frame containing a second subset of TDM data columns.

Claim 34 (Original): The system of claim 33, wherein the means for receiving a plurality of TDM data columns further comprises means for receiving a third subset of TDM data columns from a TDM user interface.

Claim 35 (Original): The system of claim 33, further comprising means for separating the second subset of TDM data columns into a plurality of DROP TDM data columns and a plurality of THROUGH TDM data columns.

Claim 36 (Currently Amended): The system of claim ~~35~~ 34, further comprising means for sending the plurality of DROP TDM data columns to the a TDM user interface.

Claim 37 (Original): The system of claim 35, wherein the outgoing TDM data frame contains the through TDM data columns.

Claim 38 (Currently Amended): The system of claim 36, wherein the outgoing TDM data frame contains a third subset of TDM data columns from the a TDM user interface.

Claim 39 (Original): The system of claim 31, wherein the means for receiving a plurality of data packets further comprises means for receiving an incoming TDM data frame containing a second

subset of data packets.

Claim 40 (Original): The system of claim 39, wherein the means for receiving a plurality of data packets further comprises means for receiving a third subset of data packets from a packet user interface.